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ABSTRACT

This short paper surveys some of the key concepts concerning the behavior called "leadership" and explores the role of leadership in the management of further and higher education. It recounts briefly six hypotheses held about the nature of leadership (the trait theory, the situational theory, the social influence theory, the functional or action-centered leadership theory, the contingency theory, and the contextual theory), suggests a number of models (or maps) that seem to have relevance to the education manager, and suggests how the role and expectations of a leader may be most effectively played. The paper also contains 12 references, a 30-item bibliography, and a list of 26 relevant Information Bank papers published by the Further Education Staff College. (KC)

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An introduction to leadership and its functions in further and higher education

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March 1989

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP AND ITS FUNCTIONS IN FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

1. This short paper is intended to survey some of the key concepts concerning the behaviour we label as "leadership", and to explore its role in the management of further and higher education. It recounts briefly six hypotheses held about the nature of leadership, suggests a number of models (or maps) which seem to have relevance to the education manager, and suggests how the role, and its expectations, of a leader may be most effectively played. At the end of the paper are references, a selected bibliography and list of relevant Information Bank papers held by the Further Education Staff College.

Why do we need to consider Leadership?

2. The current focus in education management is on the three E's of Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness, measured by sets of performance indicators. There are another three. Excellence, to which some attention is paid in terms of "quality", Envisionment, and Ethos. The first three are primarily concerned with management and administration; the last three seem to be the concern of leadership.

3. When talking in broad terms about "management", we need, also, to refer to "leadership": there is somewhere a connection. Leadership certainly seems to be part of management: a sub-set of specific skills, qualities, attitudes, flair, and action. There is an expectation in those being managed that somewhere effective leadership should be visible and exercised. Without it, management seems sterile.

4. In our personal models of "managers" we may see them as a policeman, referee, devil's advocate, dispassionate analyser, decision maker; saying yes or saying no, stopping, starting, controlling, administrator of the processes set up by institutions. Our models of "leaders", however, will be perhaps of cheer leader, enthusiast, hero finder, nurturer of champions, wanderer on walk-about, coach, trainer, facilitator, builder, excitor, and the one who gets us out of trouble and into new pastures. Managers are wealth consumers; leaders are wealth creators. Management appears to be about path following and doing the right things, whilst leadership is about path finding and doing things "right".

5. Managers are appointed; so, too, are leaders. However, whereas being appointed a manager in one sense makes you one, being an appointed leader certainly does not. Indeed, the first task of an appointed leader is survival - not to lose that leadership position. Frequently appointed leaders forget that the responsible leader is the one who is accountable, the effective leader the one whose suggestions are most widely taken up, and the psychological leader is the one with whom we most identify emotionally; these three aspects are not necessarily invested in the same person. We generally do what the manager requires, but we always follow good leaders.

6. Our expectations of the "leader in manager" suggest this. We follow those who have vision, have ways of reaching desired outcomes, who get people to do things perhaps independently of goodwill because good things get done that way, and who can resolve those issues others cannot. Research suggests that followers require seven things of leaders (or managers who exercise leadership):

   (a) To create the appropriate and most effective atmosphere in which to achieve the task.

   (b) To possess knowledge essential to the followers for task achievement.

   (c) To give forewarning of any major change likely to occur.

   (d) To uphold and enforce discipline, to do so fairly, consistently, and without favours, i.e. to establish and hold clear boundaries.

   (e) To provide as far as possible physical and psychological security.

   (f) To empower people to participate.

   (g) To give people responsibility and authority for tasks delegated to them.(1)

7. We also know that when we are appointed leader of a group, be it a course team, or Chair of an Academic Board sub-committee or working party, the fact subtly alters our relationship with that group. In their eyes you may be seen as a potential controller and dominator. You will then face a set of defence mechanisms expressed in a wide variety of behaviour:

* resistance	defiance	resentment	hostility
aggression	negativism	ridiculing	submission
blaming	withdrawing	fantasising	forming alliances
courting favour			

   This may occur even though you have no intention of using any power and authority. In one sense "leadership" is already lost; many leaders remain functioning here in a fashion despite, or in spite of, that change in relationship.

8. The second problem, having overcome that, is to earn followship, to establish influence and to begin to meet and satisfy other people's needs. At one level these are basic: survival to satisfy needs or relieve tensions, and the means to satisfy those needs (food, tools, money, knowledge, etc.). Others are more complex, based on the need of human beings to satisfy their needs in relationship with other people or in groups so that this becomes the means we rely upon heavily for satisfaction (2). Oddly enough, we then find that effective leaders act like good group members, and good group members begin to act like effective leaders. We join and stay with groups if our needs are met; we leave, psychologically or physically, if they are not. We accept the influence and direction of a leader if we regard him or her as a person through whose means we will satisfy our needs.

9. We may leave a group, and a leader, because the leader is not going anywhere interesting or he or she may upset the group definition of an equitable cost/benefit ratio - getting most of what we need in relation to the amount of energy or cost exerted in the task. We are all familiar with the new leader who, through personal insecurity or an unhelpful conceptual model of a leader, postures as vigilant overseer, and upsets the ratio by over-supervising and becoming a bureaucratic manager by:

   (a) requiring detailed activity or progress reports (and reads them);

   (b) requiring group members to seek approval before sending out letters, implementing plans, or making decisions;

   (c) taking over tasks ascribed to others to make sure they are "done properly";

   (d) making members go through the leader before making contact with people or institutions outside the group.

10. In the end it becomes a "one-man band", literally. There can be no leadership without followers. Leaders do not operate from offices because they cannot lead there (but only become a manager, who can operate thus); leadership occurs only when other people are about. Administrators need computers and papers; people are "problems".

11. Somehow we know that excellence does not derive from plodding along well laid and trodden paths. Indeed, creating excellence seems to require six human qualities ensconced in leadership behaviour:(3)

   (a) Creative insight : from asking the right questions

   (b) Sensitivity : the concept of "do unto others"

   (c) Vision : about creating the future

   (d) Versatility : anticipating change, responding with a wide repertoire of options

   (e) Focus : getting things done, attention to details

   (f) Patience : looking for the long-term rather than short-term gains

12. Already we can see distinctions between behaviour labelled "leadership" and behaviour labelled "management". They actually co-exist, like the proverbial horse and carriage; you can't have one without the other. Or, to take another song title, it ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it.

What explanations are there of leadership?

13. There appear to be six major concepts discernable in the literature on leadership.

A. THE TRAIT THEORY

14. The first, and possibly oldest analysis of leadership is that it is the property of the individual. Success lies in the possession of a core of personal abilities and qualities. We all have models, or scripts, concerning our view of leaders, and it is easy to identify those qualities which, in our experience, have either been present or absent in leaders with whom we have a good or a bad experience. We tend to ascribe success, or failure, to personal qualities such as integrity, sense of justice, confidence, courage, energy, enthusiasm, creativity, loyality, bearing, knowledge, decisiveness, etc.

15. Stodgill (4) suggests that research demonstrates that leaders, compared with their followers, have better/more/greater of the following:

Height	Responsibility
Weight	Integrity
Physical powers	Self-confidence
Appearance	Mood control
Speech	Socio-economic status
Intelligence	Social activity
Scholarship	Social skills
Knowledge	Popularity
Judgement	Prestige
Insight	Co-operation
Originality	Initiative
Adaptability	Dominance

What is interesting in the list is that some are within the individual's control (e.g. social activity, speech, appearance, knowledge) and can be developed, while many are not (e.g. height, intelligence, insight) and against which the individual may only mitigate. Hence, we derive the concept of the "charismatic leader", the one who possesses those magical skills and cognitive capacity with which to influence people and situations.

16. The concept of an ideal set of traits still lies at the centre of many processes of selection, for posts or promotion. But the trait theory may not be very helpful since it raises a number of questions which are difficult to answer satisfactorily. Can these qualities be identified? How do we measure them? If we can measure them, by say tests, are the tests robust predictors of future skills and achievement? What is the ideal set of qualities? It is impossible to find any degree of agreement in lists produced by various organisations.

17. Indeed, it is still held in some quarters that these qualities are socially, if not genetically, transmitted, so that leaders can only emerge from certain social groups or from certain kinds of educational processes. It is pessimistic if you do not possess these qualities for few of them can be acquired by training (so how do you train leaders?), and the probability is that no single set of abilities is characteristic of all successful leaders. Investigation of successful leaders can soon lead to the conclusion that many did not possess any of the desired sets and that most were mavericks.

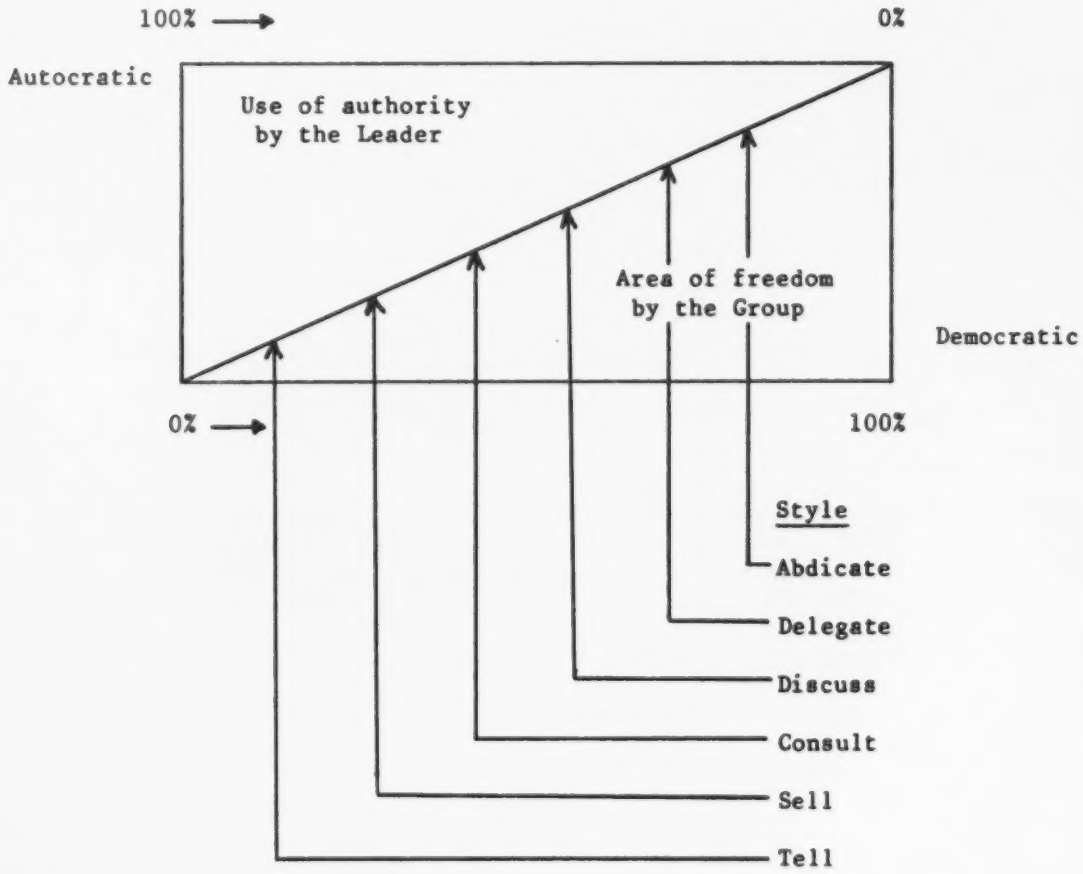
18. A further issue is that since leadership depends upon followship (you cannot lead unless someone follows you), most of these qualities are essential too, in followers. The ideal qualities for a leader are also the ideal qualities for the follower, so it is not a helpful theory in establishing (or training for) leadership.

19. Finally, are the desired core traits the same for all situations? History is full of people who were successful in one situation, but failed in another. So, perhaps leadership has something to do with the circumstances of the situation requiring leadership.

B. THE SITUATIONAL THEORY

20. Different circumstances require different characteristics, approaches, and interactions. Leadership effectiveness is therefore a function of leadership style. We now know that leadership is somehow a connection between the leader and the group. A simple continuum model suggests that the effective leader adopts a style, or set of behaviours, along a continuum ranging from one extreme, authoritarianism, to another extreme of laissez-faire, or even abdication.

Fig 1.



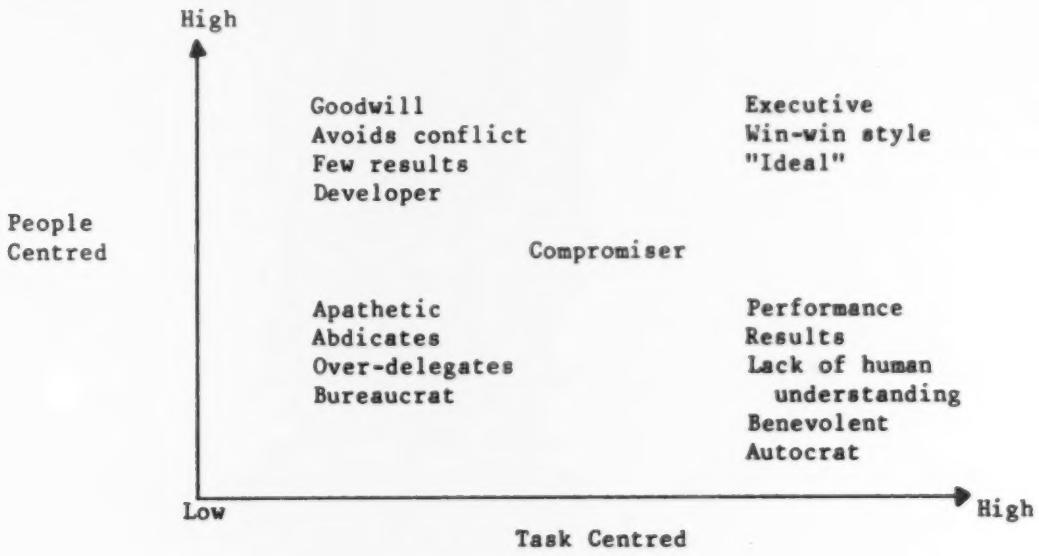
There are two problems raised by the idea of flexibility of response by the leader according to a situation possibly ranging from circumstances which require the leader to be authoritarian and autocratic in order to achieve results, to the total delegation of responsibility and authority to the group in order to achieve results and to gain the commitment of the group to those results.

(a) The first is that most human beings operate on a narrow band of behaviours. Few use the wide repertoire available to them to be as skilled in one part of the continuum as in the others: we usually have a "preferred best set" of behaviours.

(b) Secondly, we have that preferred set largely because of our personality. On the one hand there are extreme authoritarian personalities (5), and on the other, open-minded (personality refers here to all those attributes generally measured by psychometric tests).

21. For example, some people are basically "task oriented", while others are people, relationships oriented, sometimes producing the dilemma every leader faces at some time in how best to reconcile the two. According to how we respond, we may be said to have a leadership style. (6)

Fig 2.



Some followers will respond to one style; others will not. So perhaps leadership is principally a social process.

C. THE SOCIAL INFLUENCE THEORY

22. Leadership is a term describing a relationship. It is about getting things done through other people, and part of the requirement of leadership, if it is to be exercised effectively, is the possession of power and authority.

23. In education this is a vexed question since leaders possess an esoteric form of power and authority in its "legitimate" form. Some powers are laid down by Acts of Parliament, DES Circulars, LEA delegation, and the articles and instruments of government in colleges and polytechnics. These are, however, limited, unclear in certain aspects, and surrounded with difficulties so that it is often unclear on what basis of power and authority a leader may act. Hence, education leadership is generally exercised through other forms of power:

(a) Referent : the kind of power an individual is able to exercise simply because he or she is the person he or she is;

(b) Expert : leadership can be exercised with the group through the leader's possession of specialist knowledge and skills not otherwise available to the group;

(c) Reward : influence is exerted because the leader has in his or her control rewards groups and individuals would like; these may be real, such as pay and promotion, or psychological as in intrinsic job interest, status, autonomy, the ability to influence decision making;

(d) Coercive : the leader has authority and power to coerce others into work by withholding reward or giving some form of punishment (e.g. an awkward timetable);

(e) Moral : the leader can exert moral pressures to conform through personal power or perhaps through group norms and appeal to people's morality (e.g. for the good of the students);

(f) Dynastic : today little of this remains, though some people may have power through long connections with the institution or Authority.

24. How these forms of power are exerted will determine other leadership styles - the efficiency expert, the social engineer, the organisational engineer, the change agent, or the politician.

25. In the social-exchange and influence concept leadership is the capacity to influence people beyond legal approval to gain commitment, and a capacity to influence people to strive for a mutually acceptable goal. This is sometimes referred to as "transactional" or "inspirational" leadership where the leader influences other people because the leader can make clear, and manage well, six aspects of the leader's and group's needs:

(a) the meaning of the institution, its objectives and its business;

(b) the presentation symbolically of the required impression to the institution and the outside world;

(c) meeting the mutual expectations of the interaction between the leader, the group, and the task;

(d) creating and maintaining participation and involvement;

(e) providing the necessary intellectual stimulation;

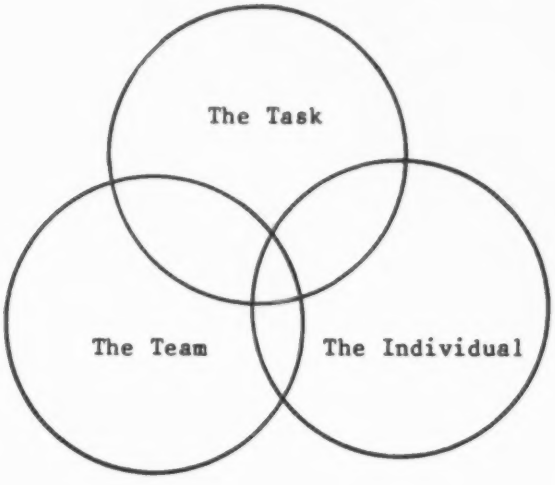
(f) clearly has and articulates a vision which meets everyone's needs and satisfactions.

Critical issues, therefore, within colleges may be those concerned with who holds power, who wields it and in what ways to what ends, and where and when precisely can a leader exert influence. This leads to another concept that an education leader might do well to examine carefully, is that not only where and when can leadership be exercised effectively, but also what the leader can actually do on those relatively sparse and public occasions. Since education clearly does not totally work through leaders exercising strong power and authority, another explanation of leadership in this context is required.

D. THE FUNCTIONAL, OR ACTION CENTRED LEADERSHIP THEORY

26. Leadership is a set of identifiable functions, tasks, and behaviours, which can be learned like any other skill. On this basis, Adair (7) suggests the model of leadership which is based on a set of tasks to carry out, and balance, within three areas of needs - of the task, the team, and the individual.

Fig 3.



27. Leadership may therefore be carried out effectively by following a check-list of things to do, or to ensure happen, to create an environment in which the leader and the group can achieve any given task. It is person-free, unlike the trait theory or social exchange theories, and suggests that effective leaders can be trained to do things. What the leader can do is more important than who or what the leader is. (See Figure 4).

Fig. 4.

TASK:

PURPOSE:	Am I clear what the task is
RESPONSIBILITIES:	Am I clear about these
OBJECTIVES:	Have I agreed these with my boss for the group
PROGRAMME:	Have I worked one out to reach objectives
WORKING CONDITIONS:	Are these right for the job
RESOURCES:	Are these adequate (Authority, Money, Materials)
TARGETS:	Has each member clearly defined and agreed them
THE BOSS:	Does everyone know to whom he is accountable
GROUP SIZE:	Is this too large - Can it be made smaller
AUTHORITY:	Is the line of authority clear
TRAINING:	Are there any gaps in the groups abilities
PRIORITIES:	Have I planned the time
PROGRESS:	Do I check this regularly and evaluate
SUPERVISION:	In case of absence who covers
APPROACH:	Do I do this against set standards
EXAMPLE:	Do I set standards by my behaviour

TEAM:

OBJECTIVES:	Does the group understand them
STANDARDS:	Do they know what is expected
QUALITY:	What standards are acceptable
SAFETY:	Do they know consequences of infringement
SIZE OF GROUP:	Is the number correct
PERSONALITY:	Are the right people working together
TEAM SPIRIT:	Is the job structured to encourage this
DISCIPLINE:	Are the rules seen to be reasonable Am I impartial
GRIEVANCES:)	Are these dealt with promptly
)	Is there a formal procedure
CONSULTATION:	Is this genuine - Encourage and welcome ideas and suggestions
BRIEFING:	Is this regular
TRADE UNIONS:	Do the group know the organisations attitude
GROUPS REPRESENTATIVES:	i.e. shop stewards etc. Do they have the facilities to be effective
BACK UP:	Am I prepared to represent the feelings of the group when required Do I visit people at their work

INDIVIDUAL:

TARGETS:	Have they been set and quantified
INDUCTION:	Does he really know the organisation
ACHIEVEMENT:	Does he know his work contribution
RESPONSIBILITIES:	Has he got a job description
AUTHORITY:	Does he have sufficient for task
TRAINING:	Has adequate provision been made
RECOGNITION:	Do I emphasise people's successes In failure is criticism constructive
GROWTH:	Does he see the chance of development
PERFORMANCE:	Is this regularly reviewed
REWARD:	Are work capacity and pay in balance
THE TASK:	Is he in the right job
PERSONALITY:	Do I know the person well
TIME/ATTENTION:	Do I spend enough with individuals listening, developing counselling
GRIEVANCE:	Are these dealt with promptly
SECURITY:	Does he know about pensions, redundancy etc. Do I visit people at their work

28. To some, this may seem a mechanistic approach; there is, after all, something about the personality and presentation of self by a leader which we experientially know does make a difference. Also, to maintain a balance between the three areas will be difficult for those who are task centred, or formalistic, or sociocentric as opposed to egocentric, and it may well be that certain situations might become more problematic by trying to maintain the balance.

29. Perhaps a more appropriate model might lie in the concept of competence, rather than behaviour, in that an effective leader needs to be competent (in the sense of a continuous above average performance which consistently produces results). Within the sphere of management, leadership is a necessary competence cluster in particular circumstances, an idea developed by Boyatzis (8). (See Figure 5).

Fig 5.

Elements of an Integrated Model of Management

Competency Clusters	Functions	Elements in the Organizational Environment
Goal and action management cluster Leadership cluster	Planning	Strategic planning process Business planning process Related climate: clarity, standards
Goal and action management cluster Leadership cluster Human resource management cluster	Organizing	Organization design Job design Personnel planning process Selection and promotion system Succession planning and career pathing systems Job evaluation system Financial resource allocation process Related climate: responsibility, clarity, standards
Goal and action management cluster Directing subordinates cluster Human resource management cluster	Controlling	Product and business unit performance review process Individual performance review process Compensation and benefits system Management information system Related climate: rewards, clarity, conformity
Human resource management cluster Leadership cluster Directing subordinates cluster	Motivating	Training and development system Compensation and benefits system Career planning process Management information system Related climate: team spirit, rewards
Human resource management cluster Focus on others cluster Leadership cluster	Coordinating	Public relations programme Grievance procedures Crossfunctional and interdepartmental coordinating processes Climate: team spirit, clarity

Whilst this may not provide all the answers, there may be something in all the theories so far.

E. THE CONTINGENCY THEORY

30. Effective Leadership is a function of four variables:

1. the personality cluster of the leader and his or her learned behaviour;

2. the predispositions, expectations, skills and personality clusters of the followers;

3. the organisation, its structure, function, tasks, and the situation it faces (leadership in a matrix, for example, might be different from that in a hierarchy, and in a growth stage different from that of a decline stage in the age of the institution);

4. the milieu, i.e. the climate, ethos, and values expressed within the institution.

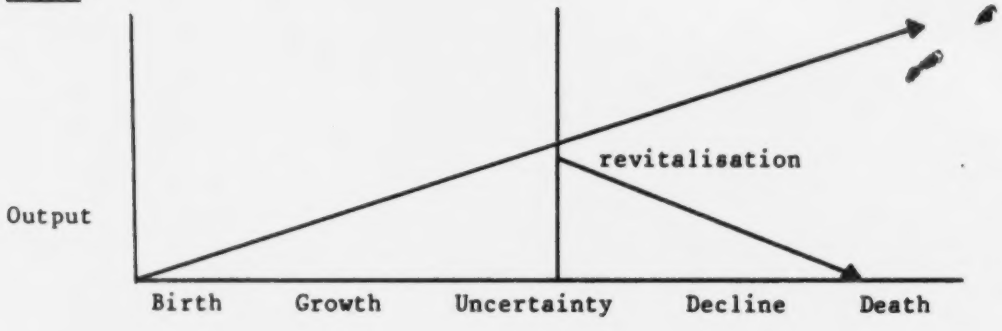
31. Education organisations certainly have a very different climate, culture, set of values, philosophies, processes and rituals from a hospital, a car factory, or an advertising agency. The differences (9) and the esoteric nature of further and higher education, that is, the specific systems context, may well fashion the nature and shape of leadership exercised. Each institution will also have its own way of doing things which may limit, or empower, leadership.

32. FHE does, however, share the polarities of "climate":

Climate "A"	Climate "B"
under threat defensive activity internal fighting delaying withdrawing putting off decisions flight from reality denial aggressive leaders oversupervision autocratic change = personal threat fantasising scapegoating "busyness"	positive interaction technical and social systems openness honesty trust sharing facing facts superteams co-operation with and for each other people work well because they are: involved committed participate own problems, successes, the work, tasks have their needs met action-getting things done

Education, too, has its fair share of organisational people problems; some are "place bound" - the locals, the homeguards, and the elders, and the "career bound", the outsiders and the empire builders, the cosmopolitans. Probably the critical task facing any education leader today is the re-energising of those whose careers are finite, those who are in the "mid-career plateau" (10), and those nearing retirement. Add to this the anticipated 25% decline in FHE and we have a context-specific system of alarming condition. Finally, there is the problem of the life-stage of an institution, and the problem that at different life-stages different forms of leadership need to be exercised (11):

Fig 6.



33. If we take into account all the variables so far mentioned, we have a complex interrelationship of nine major variables which, if not explaining leadership behaviour, certainly identify key areas of which any leader must be constantly aware and appraising.

F. THE CONTEXTUAL THEORY

34. Effective leadership is a function of sets of specific contexts and their interrelationships.

Fig 7.

The Problems of Education Leadership

35. Most people working in FHE have internalised scripts which they either own as individuals, or find them ascribed to them, and which determine the cultural climate appropriate to educational institutions and their management.

    (a) Personal models of "leaders" and "leadership" which generate expectations and behaviours which may, or may not, be appropriate and hence effective.

    (b) A college has organisational scripts about itself and the way it does things which can be observed in its climate, processes, styles, messages, and rituals, which are transmitted to all its members.

    (c) A college will have a script about its "industry", i.e. about education, teaching, and learning, and its interaction with other organisations in the same kind of business.

    (d) It will also have an environmental script in the way in which it perceives the outside world and handles its boundary transactions (i.e. with anyone not immediately in the business, its clients, customers, government, and society at large).

36. Much of these scripts will be unthinking, automatic reflexes carried on by tradition, but stress in any form reinforces scripts. Perhaps there may be a need to rethink scripts. Indeed, there is one current theory of leadership that in today's climate leadership is about change, at any cost, all the time. The key question for any leader is "What have I changed today?" If the answer is "nothing", then the organisation will die (12). Perhaps the series of shocks administered to FHE over the last ten years, and which will carry on for the next ten, are actually going to save the system. Being proactive, reactive, or responsive may be irrelevant; the one certainty is uncertainty.

37. Nevertheless, the leader (at any level from Principal/Director to course teachers) undoubtedly shapes the character and direction of any college in four dimensions. These four dimensions represent the totality and complexity of leadership in an education context.

    (a) SYMBOLIC

    The leader embodies symbolically the whole institution. Internally he or she pulls others along, towards symbolic, and actual, goals of excellence, quality, success, and organic growth. Externally, the leader represents that institution by presenting its corporate image and in obtaining resources.

    (b) POLITICAL

    The leader handles effectively the demands of all the constituencies he or she represents, gaining support, and handling and using conflict to appropriate ends.

(c) MANAGERIAL

As a manager, he or she performs the standard tasks of directing, controlling, representing, staffing, planning, structuring, setting goals, and communicating. He or she handles budgets, plant, costs, paper processes, industrial relations, and external funding and/or validating bodies. The leader is the chief executive (doing the right things) and exerting as far as possible a steady-state condition in the system.

(d) ACADEMIC

Academic leadership is about being the "best professional", leading other professionals in a collegiate style, recognising and encouraging quality, deciding where, when, and how to intervene to strengthen academic structures, coaching, setting example, taking risks, and (contrary to the chief executive role) acts as an agent of change, and seeks continuously to bring things together, cope with breakdowns, keep things going, and do new things.

38. Putting all four aspects together, academic leadership is hence basically about philosophy, and putting philosophy into action. It is a critical and reflective activity, a shared experience, a communal act of collegiality to enable talents and energies of staff to have as much positive effect as possible. Underlying this approach are three core activities:

(a) Task achievement - of the primary objectives;

(b) Maintenance of motivation, commitment, interpersonal relationships, and the needs of the task, the group, and the individual;

(c) Organisational change and growth to adapt to the environment by meeting rules, needs, and opportunities.

It is about bringing people to life, not boring them to death.

39. For the education leader the curriculum, and its development, is the key focus of all activity. Any other activity, however essential, is only supportive of the primary business of learning. Wisdom is not hierarchically distributed; education leadership is essentially a social process, empowering others beyond competence to excellence. Perhaps education requires a model of its own. The most appropriate seems to be the dynamic model of VISION - ACTION - REFLECTION.

The Vision-Action-Reflection Model

40. The academic leader is one who has vision, who puts that vision into action and gets things done, and then reflects on that action in order to reshape or re-energise the vision before continuing the cycle. It is, after all, an extension of the experiential cycle of learning which underpins most of the best learning which occurs in colleges - experience, reflection, meaning, and action, leading to further experience.

I.B.N. 2555

LEADERSHIP - TRANSFORMATIONAL / EMPOWERING CYCLE

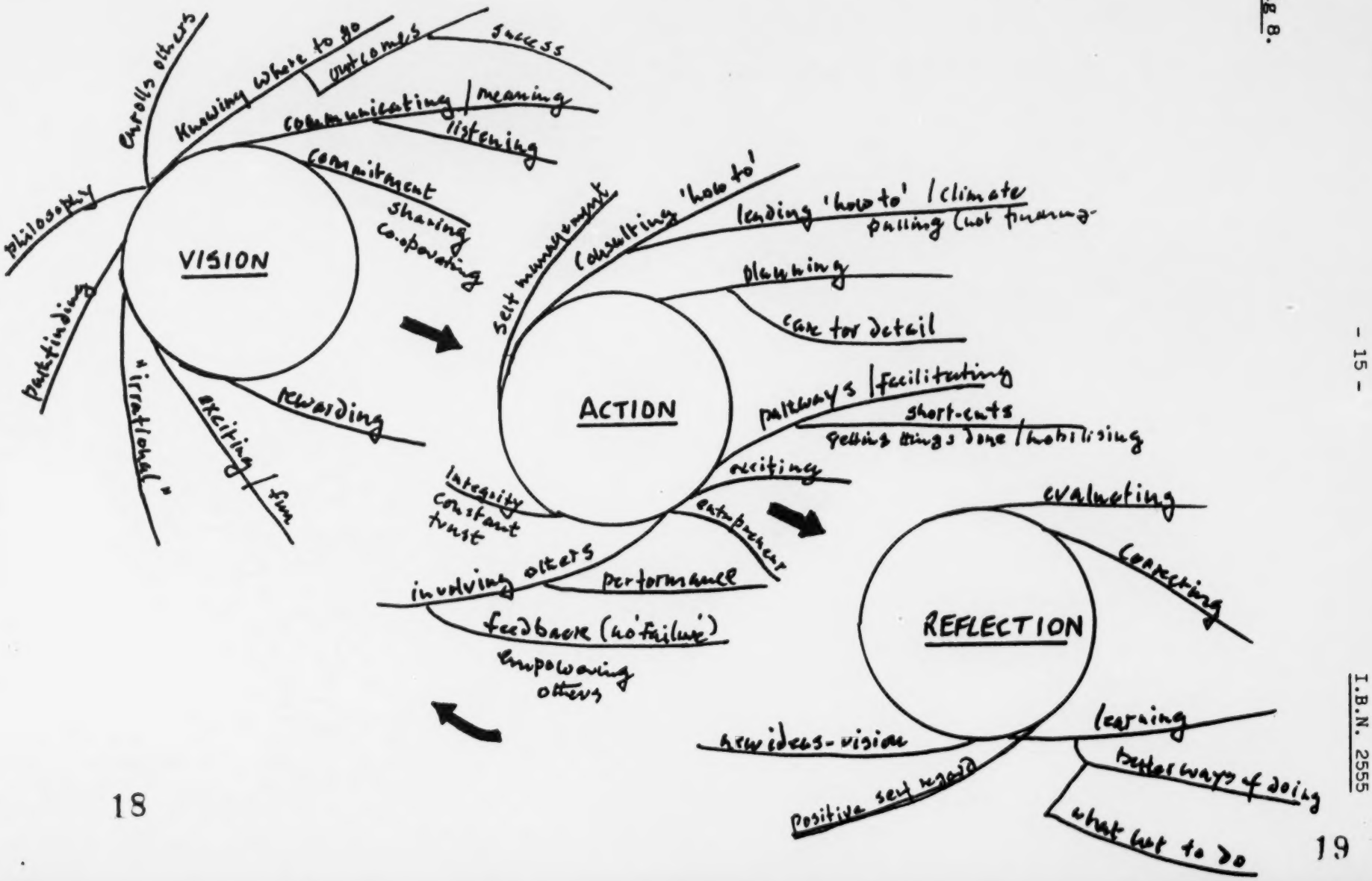


Fig 8.

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